

**Amendment to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

1. (Currently Amended) A method of authenticating communication between a first and a second party, the method comprising:

provisioning a shared secret between the first party and the second party, the provisioning a shared secret comprises establishing a secure tunnel between the first party and a server using asymmetric encryption and receiving the shared secret via the secure tunnel between the first party and the server;

establishing a subsequent secure tunnel between the first party and the second party using ~~the comprising shared secret and~~ mutually deriving a tunnel key using symmetric cryptography based on the shared secret; and

authenticating a relationship between the first party and the second party within the subsequent secure tunnel ~~using~~.

2. (Original) The method set forth in claim 1 further comprising the step of protecting the termination of the authenticated conversation by use of a tunnel encryption and authentication to protect against a denial of service by an unauthorized user.

3. (Original) The method set forth in claim 1 wherein the step of provisioning occurs within a wired implementation.

4. (Original) The method set forth in claim 1 wherein the step of provisioning occurs within a wireless implementation.

5. (Previously Presented) The method set forth in claim 1 wherein the shared secret is a protected access credential (PAC).

6. (Original) The method set forth in claim 5 wherein the protected access credential includes a protected access credential key.

7. (Original) The method set forth in claim 6 wherein the protected access credential key is a strong entropy key.

8. (Original) The method set forth in claim 7 wherein the entropy key is a 32-octet key.

9. (Original) The method set forth in claim 6 wherein the protected access credential includes a protected access credential opaque element.

10. (Original) The method set forth in claim 6 wherein the protected access credential includes a protected access credential information element.

11. (Original) The method set forth in claim 1 wherein the step of provisioning occurs through out-of-band mechanisms.

12. (Original) The method set forth in claim 1 wherein the step of provisioning occurs through in-band mechanisms.

13. (Cancelled)

14. (Previously Presented) The method set forth in claim 1, wherein the step of establishing a tunnel key further includes the step of establishing a session\_key\_seed deriving a master session key used for authenticating the relationship.

15. (Original) The method set forth in claim 1 wherein the step of authenticating is performed using EAP-GTC.

16. (Original) The method set forth in claim 1 wherein the step of authenticating is performed using Microsoft MS-CHAP v2.

17. (Currently Amended) A system for communicating via a network, the system comprising:

means for providing a communication link between a first party and a second party;

means for provisioning a shared secret between the first and the second party, the means for provisioning comprises means for establishing a secure tunnel with a server using asymmetric encryption and acquiring the shared secret through the secure tunnel;

means for establishing a subsequent secure tunnel utilizing the shared ~~credential~~secret, the means for establishing comprises means for deriving a tunnel key using symmetric cryptography based on the shared secret; and

means for authenticating a relationship between the first party and the second party within the subsequent secure tunnel.

18. (Original) The system for communicating set forth in claim 17 wherein the communication link is a wireless network.

19. (Original) The system for communicating set forth in claim 17 wherein the communication link is a wired network.

20. (Original) The system for communicating set forth in claim 17 wherein the ~~first secure credential~~shared secret is a protected access credential (PAC).

21. (Original) The system for communicating set forth in claim 18 wherein the wireless network is an 802.11 wireless network.

Claims 22 -23 (Cancelled)

24. (Currently Amended) A wireless device, comprising:

the wireless client is configured to receive a shared secret between the wireless client and a second wireless device by establishing a secure tunnel with a server using asymmetric encryption, wherein the shared secret is received via the secure tunnel;

the wireless client is configured to establish a subsequent secure tunnel between the first wireless ~~device-client~~ and the second wireless device using the shared secret to mutually derive a tunnel key using symmetric cryptography based on the shared secret; and

the wireless client is configured to mutually authenticate with the second wireless device employing the subsequent secure tunnel.

25. (Canceled)

26. (Previously Presented) A wireless device according to claim 24, the wireless device is configured to establish a secure tunnel further comprises establishing a session key seed for deriving a master session key used for mutually authenticating the second wireless device employing the secure tunnel.

27. (New) A method according to claim 1, further comprising establishing a plurality of subsequent secure tunnels between the first party and second party using the shared secret acquired from the server during provisioning.